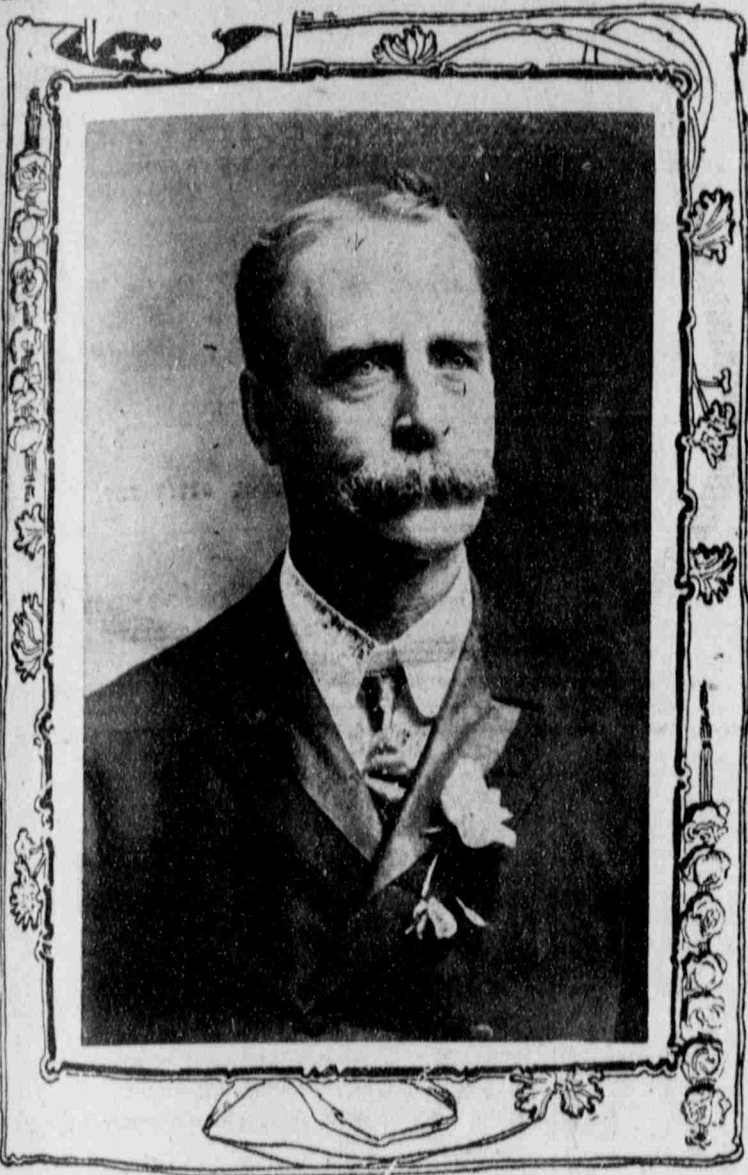


# "My Misconceptions Regarding the Mormons."

By Dr. James L. Hughes of  
Toronto, Canada.



DR. JAMES L. HUGHES,  
The Eminent Canadian Educator.

TWO years ago Dr. James L. Hughes, the eminent Canadian educator, visited Salt Lake. He was here as a lecturer and instructor. During that time he had some very kind things to say of Utah and her people. Particularly was he pleased with the work of the schools of this state; and concerning manual training at the University of Utah, he pronounced it the best, the most practical, he had ever seen in America. Naturally, the citizens of this far western commonwealth were pleased to hear such expressions—not because they tickled their vanity, for they did not, but because they were proud to have a scholar, thinker and writer as notable as Dr. Hughes, endorse and commend to which they had struggled so hard to establish.

Recently Dr. Hughes wrote an article for the Canadian Magazine published at Toronto. He calls it "My Misconceptions Regarding the Mormons." It is freely illustrated with local views and deals most interestingly with the subject that would fall under the title referred to. The article is copyrighted, and all rights reserved, but the *Deseret News* writes to Mr. John A. Cooper, editor of the Magazine, asking for permission to reproduce, a request that was freely and courteously granted, and for which thousands of the readers of this paper will be grateful. The article, minus the neatly printed illustrations, follows:

A week in Salt Lake City revealed many things to me. I learned much that I did not know before, but my learning consisted chiefly in finding that so many things which I thought were true were not.

I had a hazy opinion that the "Mormons" were an ignorant, unprogressive, rather fanatical people until 1900, when Mrs. Susan Young Gates, one of

religious exercises—marriage and the ceremonies for the dead. No Gentile is permitted to enter the Temple at any time, and no "Mormon" may enter for any purpose but the two named, and then only by special permission of the President. The Tabernacle is the place of meeting for religious exercises, sacred concerts, conference meetings, and other church gatherings. The Assembly Hall is used for lectures and business meetings. The Tabernacle seats about 10,000 and the Assembly Hall 4,000.

On arriving at the great square I found a crowd of several thousand men and women busily engaged in separating after a meeting in which they had been engaged for several days. I hurried through the throng to the Tabernacle, anxious to be present at the closing exercises of the conference. I entered by one of the great side doors, and found a vast audience of 10,000 listening intently to the last words of President Smith. He stood in the center of a great gallery which surrounded the floor of the Tabernacle, and on which were seated in three rising almost to the roof the large choir, which took first place among American choirs at the musical competition at the Chicago exhibition of 1893, and several hundred of the leading officers of the church throughout the world. Immediately under him sat the three counselors who take rank next to him and are his advisors. Under the counselors sat the Twelve Apostles of the Church, and radiating upwards and outwards from this central group sat the bishops, the heads of Seventies, the Elders, and other leading officials.

I looked; I could not listen. I studied the vast concourse for a few minutes as a whole, and then began a careful character study of the faces I saw. I saw nothing of what I had been led to expect. Those faces revealed intelligence, enthusiasm, practical sense and intense earnestness. I next searched for the unhappy faces of dissatisfied, repressed women. Again I searched in vain. I saw only high-minded women, calm and dignified, conscious of a freedom still refused to most women, but winsome and womanly. The "Mormon" type I saw it in the Tabernacle and around it may be described as a composite type which might be formed by a union of the strong distinctive elements of Methodists and Quakers.

The President spoke briefly, and after the closing hymn he prayed fervently and gave the closing benediction. Then through the side doors between the supporting piers the great audience swept out in a few moments. The officials of the Church in the end gallery remained for more extended farewells. I scanned the faces of the women on the gallery searching for my one friend in Utah, Mrs. Gates. Not seeing her, I walked across the Tabernacle to an old lady, the only one who had remained seated after the audience dispersed. I told her I was looking for Mrs. Susan Young Gates, and asked if she knew her.

"I think so," she replied merrily. "I am her mother." So I had the satisfaction of meeting one of the widows of the great leader himself, and of being introduced by her to Apostle Reuel Smoot, now United States Senator from Utah.

Then began a series of revelations which moved some of my misconceptions. Apostle Smoot kindly took me to the President's office and answered my many questions for an hour till the president of the Teachers' Association came for me. Apostle Smoot was himself a revelation. I had thought that Apostles must necessarily be ministers. I found him to be a millionaire, a business gentleman of ability and high standing. I learned from him that the Bishops are generally business men, and that the leading Church officers are chosen from the wisest and most successful men of their districts. He told me that the "Mormon" Church at that time had over 1,800 young men and women doing missionary work in different parts of the world; but I found that mission work does not necessarily mean trying to make converts for the Church. In most cases it means performing some work of a business character for the Church. One noteworthy feature of the mission work is that the young men who go to Europe or to the Sandwich Islands, or to Canada, or to any other country to work for the Church, pay their own expenses. It is a mission of self-sacrifice for the commonweal, and such an experience must tend to the development of a strong, true type of character.

I asked Apostle Smoot about the education of the girls and found that the "Mormons" are more keenly alive to the importance of highly cultured, well developed, properly trained motherhood than any other people I have met. This need is not a matter of opinion merely—it is a vital element in their system. I found in the schools, the academies, and the university that the girls and young women are receiving just as thorough an education as the young men. Apostle Smoot's sister is at the head of the Kindergarten Training college for Utah. She was trained in Berlin, President Smith, the present head of the "Mormon" people, told me that he had sent his daughters to New York, one to study Kindergarten principles, and the other to study domestic science. The second state superintendent of schools in Utah was a woman—Mrs. McVicker. The daughter of Susan Young Gates, after completing her education in America and three years' training in Berlin, is at the age of 22, the most promising singer of American birth. Major Pond tried to atone for some of the wrong he did her grandfather by arranging her concerts in the great music halls of Boston, New York and the other great cities of the east.

The interest taken in musical education was one of my surprises. Many of the young men and women who show special talent for music are sent abroad for a thorough musical education. Brigham Young was a man of comprehensive insight and masterful executive ability. In the midst of his ceaseless work in transforming a desert into a most fruitful country, in designing and erecting the most remarkable places of worship in America, in laying out a beautiful city, and in planning one of the most perfectly organized religious and social systems in the world, he still found time to study educational systems, and he gave his people a system that aims to cultivate the whole nature of the child, physically, intellectually, practically, esthetically and spiritually.

One of the established customs in Salt Lake City is to give an organ recital twice a week during the noon hour on the great organ in the Tabernacle. Thousands attend these recitals to hear the talented young organist, Mr. McCullum, perform the best music of the great composers.

I found too, that the "Mormon" people have very advanced educational institutions. The state schools and the "Mormon" schools provide an excellent education for the people. I have not seen anywhere in the United States a more advanced Normal school than the State Normal school in Salt Lake City. I had believed that the "Mormon" leaders tried to keep their people shut in from the world in order that they might more easily be kept in the faith. I found it to be a cardinal principle of the Church to send the leading young men and women abroad for study and work in order that they may bring back to Utah the most advanced ideas of the highest civilization in all lands. They usually have about 2,000 young people in other lands, and in nearly all cases they have been guided by the fact that the Church has three wives before he went to Harvard to study for his degree. This illustration shows that polygamy did not leave marks on him that were recognizable by his friends.

I did not expect to find the "Mormons" people great students of the Bible, but I found it to be one of the chief texts in the academies and universities. I knew no other people who study the Bible so persistently. The life of Christ is the history studied most carefully in the university.

A friend in Salt Lake City requested me to take a message on my way home to her 17-year-old daughter, who was attending the Conservatory of Music in Detroit. She was living in Detroit with a lady whose uncle was one of the most prominent Methodist ministers in Canada in his time, and who was educating herself in a leading Methodist college in Canada. She told me that she asked the mother of the little "Mormon" girl how she wished her to spend her Sundays. "Oh!" replied the mother, "take her to church with you, and I shall be specially obliged if you can spend some time in studying the Bible with her." The lady assured me that the girl knew the Bible more thoroughly than she herself, or anyone else whom she had ever known. I had not thought of the "Mormons" as people who appreciated amusements. I found that Brigham Young built a fine theater for his people, which is still owned and managed by the Church. It was for many years the custom to have amateur companies, and prominent young men went annually to New York to see the best plays in the theaters in order to bring the most suitable for Salt Lake City audiences. The present governor of Utah was one of the leading actors of the city. Concerts, lectures, and other cultural entertainments are attended by large audiences in Salt Lake City. In my own experience I shared the common belief that any "Mormon" who who those to whom might marry more than one wife, Apostle Smoot removed this misconception at once by informing me that at no time were more than four per cent of the "Mormon" men permitted to marry more than one wife. Those who secured such permission had to enter a special church order, and admission to this order was granted only to those men who had the highest standing morally, intellectually and physically. In addition to these qualifications, they had to prove their financial ability to justify the assumption of the increased responsibilities of polygamy.

Mrs. Young, Mrs. Gates' mother, told me many times Mr. Young, when refusing applications for admission to the polygamous order would say "No," firmly, but kindly, and add: "I am sorry you are allowed to have one wife," when the applicant was a man lacking in important essentials of high character. Since 1891 new polygamous marriages have been prohibited, but the leaders, both men and women, believe in polygamy still under clearly defined conditions. The men, like Mr. Roberts, have chivalrously refused to desert their wives even for situations of honor in Congress, or for other public positions, and the women have been equally faithful to their former relationships. When the United States government ordered that every "Mormon" should give up all his wives but the one to whom he was first married, it was naturally supposed that a great many women would be left without support, and the government generously erected a large institution to provide a home for them; but the "Mormon" women took no advantage of the provisions thus made for them. The "Mormon" women whom I met believe polygamy to be right quite as firmly as the men.

It may help to remove erroneous views regarding the "Mormon" attitude towards polygamy to state that the Book of Mormon explicitly condemns polygamy, but gives the Church the right to authorize it in case the Lord reveals the need of raising a people of special power.

I do not wish to be understood as advocating polygamy, but it is a fact that the leaders, the governor, Senator Smoot, the state superintendent of education, the president of the university, the principal of the normal school, and most of the leading men in Salt Lake City, were brought up in polygamous families, and those with whom I conversed on the subject spoke kindly and affectionately of their father's wives, other than their own mothers.

One of the most prominent "Mormons" of Salt Lake City visited Toronto a few months ago, and I asked a few friends to meet him at lunch, and introduced him to a number of people, ladies and gentlemen, during the visit. After he left, I asked them as I met them how they liked my "Mormon" friend. They all said: "Oh! He is a fine man, but he is not a polygamist." The fact is that he had three wives before he went to Harvard to study for his degree. This illustration shows that polygamy did not leave marks on him that were recognizable by his friends.

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JOHN F. WALLACE, WHO IS TO DIG THE PANAMA CANAL.



With the payment of the \$40,000,000 to the French Canal company and the appointment of John F. Wallace as chief engineer of the canal, this cherished project of the American people takes more tangible shape. Mr. Wallace is a typical American engineer, full of vim and go, and the actual work of building the canal will progress rapidly under him.

I have never had such large or enthusiastic audiences anywhere. For five nights the Assembly Hall was crowded, and more than 3,000 came out at half past nine to a lecture delivered by special request the morning I left the city.

I had supposed that Utah was the earliest place in the world in which to get married. The fact is that it is the most difficult place in which to take a life partner, if one is a "Mormon." "Mormon" can be married except in a temple, so that it may be necessary to travel very long distances to have the ceremony performed.

The sacraments and ceremonies for the dead were a revelation to me. These may be continued for years after a man's death by his widow and his friends. When a man dies his brother or some intimate friend represents him and performs certain rites on his behalf. These ceremonies are performed in the temples only.

A very interesting and cultured gentleman told me that the writings of Froebel, which I was trying to expound, had affected him when he read them as no other books ever had; and he said that about 12 years ago Froebel appeared to him in a vision, and asked him to have the sacraments of the dead performed for him. He went to the Temple and personated Froebel, and received the sacraments of the Church in Froebel's name.

My geographical knowledge was defective. I expected to find Salt Lake City on the shores of Salt Lake. Again I was wrong. The lake is 15 miles from the city. A railroad owned by the "Mormon" authorities runs from the city to the lake during the long summer season, and a magnificent amusement pavilion, and splendid bathing accommodation, afford ample opportunity for enjoyment at the beautiful lake. As the season was over when I was there, the President very kindly provided a special train so that I might enjoy a swim in the buoyant water; at any rate, I expected to swim. Again I was surprised. I could not sink low enough

in the water to be able to swim properly. Lying on my back, I tried in vain to get my feet in the water. One of the most amusing sights to be seen anywhere in the world is a common experience at Salt Lake. A man who wishes to enjoy himself perfectly lights his cigar, sits down on the water, attaches a sail to his feet, and holding the rope in his hands, and reclining in an easy position on the cushioned boom of the lake, sails where he chooses.

The view of the beautiful mountains surrounding Salt Lake is one of the finest I have ever seen. When I saw them the lower third of the mountains was green, the middle third looked like a vast garden filled with brilliantly colored flowers, while a crown of crystal whiteness covered their heads. Time never passed more pleasantly for me than when I reclined in an easy posture with nearly half my body out of the water, on Salt Lake, and looked at the grandeur of the surrounding mountains as they were toned to richest beauty by the evening sun.

Salt Lake City itself was a surprise to me. Its broad streets, its fine business houses, its splendid homes, its excellent public buildings, its magnificent mountain background, and the crystal streams running on both sides of the streets, are distinctive features of this unique and beautiful city.

I had no adequate conception of the wealth of Utah. Agriculturally the great valley has been made a vast and rich garden, by turning the mountain streams into a great system of irrigation.

Salt Lake itself is a source of incalculable wealth. The "Mormon" Church has immense salt works at the lake, which yield a large revenue. Utah is one of the richest parts of the United States in mineral wealth. In 1902 it mined more iron than any other state.

Taken as a whole, there is probably no other city where an unprejudiced man may find better opportunities for studying economic, social and educational questions than in Salt Lake City.

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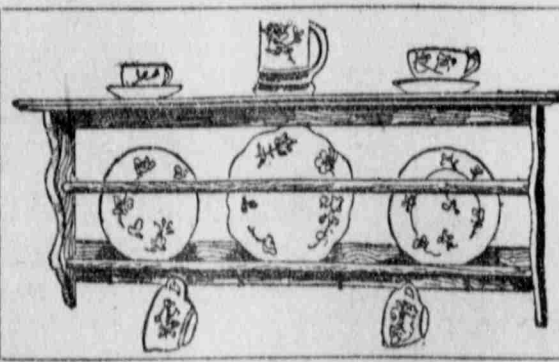
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